

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SS-15 USIE-00 NSC-05 L-03 AGR-05

AGRE-00 ARAE-00 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7467

INFO USMISSION OECD PARIS IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 9626

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AORG, OECD, CO

SUBJECT: COLOMBIAN APPLICATION FOR OECD MEMBERSHIP

REF: STATE 233197

1. IN EMBASSY'S VIEW, THE COLOMBIAN APPLICATION FOR OECD MEMBERSHIP HAS PRESENTED U.S. AND OTHER OECD COUNTRIES WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO RESPOND POSITIVELY TO CONSTRUCTIVE EFFORTS ON THE PART OF MODERATE, DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. THE OECD HAS LONG HAD THE REPUTATION OF BEING A RICH BOYS' CLUB, CLOSED TO OUTSIDE INFLUENCE, AND A REFLEXIVE REJECTION OF THE COLOMBIAN INITIATIVE WOULD ONLY SERVE TO PERPETUATE THIS CONCEPT. MOREOVER, IT WOULD SEEM TO US DIFFICULT TO MAINTAIN THE POSITION THAT THE OECD IS ONLY FOR THE INDUSTRIALIZED DEMOCRACIES AS LONG AS TWO MEMBERS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR THE US GSP.

2. ACCORDING TO USMISSION OECD 27353, THE ORGANIZATION ITSELF RECOGNIZES THAT IT HAS BEEN LAX IN ITS EFFORTS

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TO DEVELOP A RANGE OF POSSIBILITIES FOR OFFICIAL RELA-

TIONS WITH NON-MEMBER COUNTRIES OR TO MAINTAIN ACTIVE THE COUNCIL WORKING PARTY ON EXTERNAL RELATIONS. FACED WITH THE COLOMBIAN CHALLENGE, IT WOULD SEEM MOST APPROPRIATE FOR THE OECD, AT THE INSISTENCE OF THE USG, PROMPTLY TO REVIVE THE WORKING PARTY AND ANY OTHER APPROPRIATE SUB-COMMITTEES TO STUDY THE QUESTION IN DETAIL WITH AN EYE TO ADOPTING A POLICY OF SOME TYPE OF ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP OR PERMANENT OBSERVER STATUS (BOTERO'S EARLIER THOUGHT SEE BOGOTA 5514).

3. THE COLOMBIAN APPLICATION IS RODRIGO BOTERO'S SHOW. ACCORDING TO ROBERTO SOTO (UNTIL RECENTLY FOREIGN OFFICE UNDER SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS), BOTERO'S COORDINATION WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTRY ON MATTERS HE CONSIDERS TO BE WITHIN ITS JURISDICTION IS MINIMAL, OFTEN TO THE POINT OF COMMUNICATING DIRECTLY WITH COLOMBIAN EMBASSIES. NEVERTHELESS, IN THE CASE AT HAND, WE MUST PRESUME THAT FOREIGN MINISTER LIEVANO AND THE PRESIDENT ARE AWARE OF BOTERO'S ACTIONS, AND ARE NOT OPPOSING THEM. BOTERO DID TELL US LAST JUNE THAT COLOMBIA WOULD BE SEEKING OBSERVER STATUS AT THE OECD (BOGOTA 5514) AND EXPRESSED HIS HOPE AT THAT TIME THAT WE WOULD NOT OPPOSE THE COLOMBIAN INITIATIVE. HE PROBABLY DID NOT FOCUS ON THE DATE OF THE HEADS OF DELEGATION MEETING (A WEEKLY EVENT?). HE DOES NOT EXPECT AN IMMEDIATE REPLY TO THE COLOMBIAN APPLICATION, AS EVIDENCED BY HIS REQUEST THAT THE SUBJECT BE PLACED ON THE "AGENDA FOR CONSIDERATION AT SOME SUITABLE DATE IN THE NEAR FUTURE" AND HIS WILLINGNESS TO APPEAR "PERSONALLY BEFORE THE COUNCIL AT A MUTUALLY CONVENIENT OPPORTUNITY." WE DOUBT THAT THE GOC HAS CONSULTED WITH OTHER LATIN AMERICAN GOVERNMENTS.

4. THERE ARE UNDOUBTEDLY SEVERAL REASONS BEHIND THE GOC APPLICATION, SOME OF WHICH ARE STATE IN THE LETTER TO SECRETARY SIMON: A) THE BELIEF THAT COLOMBIA RELATIVELY EQUAL IN ECONOMIC POWER TO SEVERAL OECD MEMBERS; B) THE FACT THAT THE COUNTRY HAS A STABLE AND GROWING ECONOMY WITH PROSPECTS FOR HIGH GROWTH RATES OVER THE NEXT DECADE; C) THE BELIEF THAT COLOMBIA, CONFIDENTIAL

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BECAUSE OF ITS DEMOCRATIC TRADITIONS AND RELATIVE MODERATION IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, HAS SOMETHING TO OFFER IN A CONSTRUCTIVE NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE, AND D) THE REALIZATION THAT THE NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE WILL BECOME INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT IN COMING YEARS, COUPLED WITH A DESIRE TO PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY IN IT. IT IS APPARENT THAT COLOMBIA IS SEEKING A ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS WELL BEYOND COFFEE OR THE PURELY

REGIONAL MATTERS OF THE ANDEAN PACT. WE HAVE SEEN EVIDENCE OF THIS RECENTLY IN COLOMBIA'S INFORMED AND FAIRLY ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE MTN, THE POSITIVE COLOMBIAN VOTE AT UNCTAD FOR AN INTERNATIONAL RESOURCES BANK, THE COUNTRY'S MODERATION INFLUENCE AT SELA MEETINGS, EFFORTS TO EXPAND TRADE RELATIONS WITH EUROPE (INCLUDING THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES) AND ASIA, AND INITIATIVES AT THE UNITED NATIONS ON SOVEREIGNTY OVER UPPER AIR SPACE AND TERRORISM. USG WILLINGNESS (ALMOST EAGERNESS) TO LISTEN TO THE COLOMBIANS AND TO SEEK THEIR OPINIONS, COMBINED WITH THE VISITS OF THE PRESIDENT AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER TO WASHINGTON AND OF THE SECRETARY TO BOGOTA, HAVE PROBABLY REINFORCED THE COLOMBIAN LEADERSHIP'S OPINION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THEIR COUNTRY.

5. A REFUSAL ON OUR PART TO BACK SOME KIND OF PERMANENT GOC ASSOCIATION WITH THE OECD IS LIKELY TO BE VIEWED HERE AS AN INDICATION THAT WE ARE LESS THAN FULLY COMMITTED TO A PRODUCTIVE DIALOGUE WITH THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND THAT WE DO NOT UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE THAT A COUNTRY LIKE COLOMBIA ATTACHES TO SUCH A DIALOGUE AND PARTICIPATING IN IT. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, IT SEEMS TO US THAT IT IS IN OUR LONG TERM INTEREST TO VIEW THE COLOMBIAN INITIATIVE AS A POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT AND TO STIMULATE THE OECD INTO TAKING POSITIVE ACTION. IF FULL MEMBERSHIP IS NOT IN ORDER, WE SHOULD AT THE VERY LEAST STIMULATE THE OECD INTO ESTABLISHING, ON A PRIORITY BASIS, THE CATEGORY OF OBSERVER OR ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP.  
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